

The Ageless Mystery

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The qualities of changelessness and everlastingness ascribed to God by man have not always been ascribed to him. The idea of God has grown, matured, and developed as the human mind has progressed, beginning with a narrow family or tribal deity and becoming a universal omnipresence. There are two reasons why these narrow conceptions of God have existed through the years.

First of all, abstract qualities and entities have had their origins and existences in the human mind. The great Hellenic philosophers discussed at great length the possibility of the existence of truth, honesty, justice, and the omnipresent, apart from their conception by the human mind. No satisfactory proof of their hypotheses, however, was worked out, so it is apparent that the existence and the presence of God are qualities attributed to Him by man.

The second reason for these human limitations which characterize the idea of God is closely connected to the first and lies in a basic shortcoming of the human mind. The human mind is finite in its nature. The human mind can picture only those things which have definite mete and measure. Beginnings and ends characterize human thinking. When man tries to conceive of something which has always existed and which will always exist, he is left groping in the dark for the complete meaning. The words "eternity", "infinity", "forever", and the like are meaningless to man in their literal sense. These words exist only general-

ly and comparatively. An approach to an adequate conception of God, then, lies in the removal of the qualities of the Eternal from the basic limitations of the human mind, as far as is possible.

This shift from introspection to objectivity can be made by studying the qualities of some concrete physical phenomenon which is generally considered to be everlasting. Most thinkers agree that the universe, of which our solar system is a tiny part, has eternal qualities. They tell us that the universe has existed and will continue to exist forever. It would seem logical, then, that these two abstract concepts would possess certain qualities in common. These known qualities of the universe can help us to understand the nature of God.

The beauty of the stars and of the planets is paradoxically personal and universal. Each person can see and feel its presence as his own, and yet it belongs to mankind as a whole. The universe is neither narrow nor localized, but is all enveloping. In its greatness, the universe is above petty concerns and differences. It can be depended upon as being regular and unwavering. The universe has a certain code of natural laws which must be obeyed.

Thus, the totality of God's greatest work seems to have absorbed more of His qualities than other specialized works, so that a thoughtful consideration and study of the universe would lead man to a closer understanding of the ageless mystery, God.